7: Janlekha X-4,5 (1948-1953)1956 AO7 Central Thai AO7
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The monsoon climate of the region in which the village lies gives the area an annual rainfall, averaged over a recent ten year period, of about fifty inches; the effective rainfall, for the critical months when the rice is in the ground, is about forty inches.[3] The minimum precipitation requirement for wet rice is about seventy inches a year. This rainfall deficiency in the central plain of Thailand is made up by direct flooding from the rivers which flow in from the mountains and plateaux on the northeast, north, and west, the run-off rate fortunately being low because forests still cover much of these uplands. The whole plain is channeled for simple distribution of the spate of these rivers which occurs during October, November, and December, just before the harvest of rice. Because most fields are fed by gravity without an artificial head of water, or with only small heads impounded behind water gates, the depth and duration of flooding cannot be wholly controlled. As a result, variable water supply produces a wide variability in harvests and crop risks may be considerable. For 117 years between 1831 and 1948 the ministry of Agriculture records four major damaging floods (1831, 1879, 1917, and 1942), four years of extreme drought, thirty-five years of severe drought, and twenty-one years of moderate drought, leaving only fifty-three years of optimal supply of water.[4]

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3. Central Service of Statistics, Statistical Yearbook of Thailand, No. 21, 1939-40-1944. Bangkok, 1950.

4. Ministry of Agriculture, Thailand and Her Agricultural Problems (Bangkok, 1950).

361 direction dividing it into two halves, the Bangchan half
312 consisting of BC4, BC5, BC6, and the Kannayao half consistingoof KY5, KY6, KY7 and KY8.

621 As mentioned earlier, our functional Bangchan village
634 is under two different administrative authorities, the Bangchan half consisting of part of Tambol Bangchan which is in turn part of Amphur Minburi in Changwad Phra-nakorn (Bangkok) and the Kannayao half consisting of part of Tambol Kannayao which is part of Amphur Bangkapi in the same Changwad Phranakorn.

History of Settlement

194 No official records on the history of the settlement
361 of Bangchan could be discovered, but evidence from genealo-
[503] gies provides a few clues on the subject. Following the digging of Saensaeb Canal some one hundred and twenty years ago, settlement was made along the banks of this important canal which provides one of the few connections between the
175 Menam and Bangprakong rivers. It was not, however, until
621 the 1870's, apparently, that people found it necessary to
361 move onto the land away from the canal. At that time, according to one of our older informants, her father was born in what is now Bangchan, his father and mother having come out from Bangkok as a young married couple to take up farm-
175 ing where plenty of land was available from the Crown. These
621 people and their followers, usually kinfolk or friends, cleared off scrub jungle areas in which, it is claimed, tigers and

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621 elephants still roamed. They thus opened up to commercial rice production a new region lying behind the thin fringe of population already occupying all land bordering Saensaeb Canal.

The genealogies suggest that it was not until the 1880's that any major settlement occurred in Bangchan. There is doubtless a correlation between the rapid development of the community from then on and the increasing national and international demand for rice. Many of the settlers of this period were persons displaced from a southern and a northern section of Bangkok who were uprooted by the government which forced purchase of their land for the first Thai railroad and a large munitions factory. The Thai Islam or Moslem group in Bangchan claims descent from Patani Malays who were sent north by the Thai government in the course of wars during the 1830's and 1840's; many of their families settled in Donburi or along Saensaeb Canal before moving into the Bangchan area. Another element came into the region in the 1890's when some Lao Thai were encouraged to settle here after having fled their countryiin the northeast when the French occupied it in 1893.

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By 1895 the Bangchan population was sufficiently numerous to support its own wat, which was established and officially recognized about that time and has flourished ever since.

7: Janlekha X-4,5 (1948-1953)p956 AO7 Central Thai AO7
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434 amounted to somewhere around 5,000 baht, which was about
463 four times as much as the labor earnings of an average rice
621 farm operator as we shall see later.

178 The present occupational situation and accounts of
463 the changes in the past few years alone may not be enough to give us a complete picture of occupational development since the beginning of the history of Bangchan. Fourtunately, however, since settlement in the village in a considerable scale took place only some eighty years ago, evidence from genealogical studies has provided us with ample materials on which a reconstruction of the past development may be made.

• [175] When Bangchan was being settled in the 1870's, as a probable consequence of the increasing national and international demand for rice and the revolutionary change in Thai society, every family was naturally a farm operator family. As long as there was land available for clearing, opportunity would be open for every new family, either branching off from the old ones or moving in from the outside, to operate a rice farm.

[161] Eventually, population grew up to a size large enough
[194] to support a temple in 1895. Population growth and the
[175] emergence of a village center at the temple prompted occupational specialization. At the beginning, investing, trading, professional servicing, and home enterprising probably took the forms of secondary occupations, while farm operating remained the primary occupation throughout. In time, these secondary occupations became more and more specialized and